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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 001132

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SA/INS, PRM/RMACKLER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NEPAL: GON RELEASES TIBETAN REFUGEE FROM  
DETENTION

REF: (A) KATHMANDU 1074 (B) KATHAMNDU 1044

1. (SBU) ON JUNE 17, NEPAL'S DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION RELEASED A MALE TIBETAN REFUGEE INTO UNHCR'S CUSTODY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER THE OFFICE OF TIBET PAID HIS FINE OF 7,500 RUPEES (APPROXIMATELY 98 USD). THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION HAD DETAINED THE MAN IN LATE APRIL, SHORTLY AFTER THE DETENTION OF THE 18 REFUGEES DEPORTED ON MAY 31 (REF A). THE OFFICE OF TIBET REPORTED THAT THE TIBETAN MAN HAD SOMEHOW BEEN SEPARATED FROM THE LARGER GROUP IN TRANSIT, AND SUBSEQUENTLY HAD NOT BEEN INCLUDED WITH THAT GROUP DURING THE DEPORTATION. [NOTE. NINE TIBETAN REFUGEES REMAIN IN DETENTION (DATING FROM JUNE 2000 TO MAY 2002) WITH HEAVY FINES RANGING FROM USD 1,600 TO USD 10,000. END NOTE.]

2. (SBU) UNHCR REPORTS THAT ON JUNE 19 IT WILL SUBMIT A REQUEST TO THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION FOR EXIT PERMITS FOR A NEW GROUP OF 40 TIBETAN REFUGEES. (ONE GROUP OF 40 TIBETANS WAS GRANTED EXIT PERMITS JUNE 13 AND DEPARTED THE SAME DAY ON A BUS TO NEW DELHI.) UNHCR GENEVA REPORTEDLY IS DELIBERATING ON WHETHER TO INCLUDE THE NAMES OF THE THREE CHILDREN WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL GROUP OF 21 REFUGEES (REF B).

3. (SBU) COMMENT: THE GON IS ANXIOUS TO REESTABLISH ITS CREDENTIALS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SINCE THE MAY 31 DEPORTATION OF 18 TIBETAN REFUGEES. FOLLOWING GON PROMISES THAT ITS POLICY TOWARD TIBETAN REFUGEES HAD NOT CHANGED (REFTELS), THE JUNE 17 RELEASE OF THE TIBETAN REFUGEE IS A PROMISING FIRST STEP TOWARDS DEMONSTRATING THIS COMMITMENT. POST WILL CONTINUE TO TRACK THE STATUS OF THE THREE REFUGEE CHILDREN AS FURTHER PROOF THAT GON POLICY DOES NOT SUPPORT FURTHER DEPORTATIONS. END COMMENT.

BOGGS